ORIGIN/ACTION

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

POL 2-3 ARAB-FR

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Kuwait, Amman, Baghdad, Jidda

INFO: Athens, Tehran, Nicosia, Paris, Bern, London, Bonn, Rome, Tel Aviv

MAR 4 11 10 AM '64

FROM : DEPARTMENT OF STATE DATE:

SUBJECT: Expanded Cooperation Between France and Arab Countries

REF

There are indications that the French may be adopting a policy of more active cooperation with Arab countries, particularly the UAR. The recent assignment of one of the top officials in the Quai d'Orsay as Ambassador to the UAR, the current visit of a French Parliamentary delegation to Cairo, the mid-February visit of UAR Minister of Treasury and Planning Kaissouni to Paris, the absence of any criticism of France in Nasser's speech of February 22, unconfirmed reports that President DeGaulle may visit Cairo, reported interest of certain French firms engaged in military and non-military fields to develop closer commercial ties in the UAR, the recent Saudi agreement with French companies for drilling for water and possibly oil, and the French Government guarantee on a commercial financing proposition for Amman airport are examples of what would seem to be a new and independent French approach to the Near East.

The UAR Ambassador to Washington has informed a Department officer of current Arab hopes for French economic and diplomatic support. He has commented that President DeGaulle has already demonstrated his realism and his capacity for dramatic changes of policy. Citing an alleged proposal made by the French Minister of Information, Alain Peyrefitte, that Europe take over the responsibility for economic development of non-aligned nations, the Ambassador has suggested that DeGaulle may be contemplating abandoning his special association with Israel in favor of a new association with the Arab states, thereby stealing the show from Washington and London. The Lebanese and Jordanian press have been reflecting the same theme, comparing France's Arab policy favorably with American and British policy and noting the benefits France allegedly could reap from the deterioration in relations between Arabs and the Anglo-American-Israeli alliance."

Group 3
Downgraded at 12-year intervals;
Not automatically declassified.

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Drafted by: NEA:NE:FMDickman:es:3/2/64

Contents and Classification approved by: NEA - John D. Jernegan

Clearances: Commerce - Mr. Sethian; GTL - Mr. Bowling (draft); INR-Mr. Wyson; WE - Mr. Imhof; NE/E-Mr. Duncan; NE - Mr. Davies (draft)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 9-1-78
RELEASE IN FULL
RELEASE IN PART
EXCISE TOS NEXT DATE
REASON(S)
EO 11652 EXEMPTION CATEGORIES

Action addressees are requested to report the trend of French political, economic and commercial relations with their country of responsibility.

Since reports reaching the Department from Greece, Cyprus and Iran also indicate a possible new level of French activity, it would be useful if posts in these countries could also comment.

RUSK